

16-hour days for 7 days. The group included emergency management personnel, firefighters, logistical support, public information officers, police, and crisis counselors. One of the members of the Hardee County EOC, Mr. Richard Shepard, says he felt a responsibility to go to Mississippi because he needed to give something back for all the help he had received last year.

The South Florida Urban Search and Rescue Team, comprised of 80 firefighters from agencies throughout Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, returned home after spending nearly 2 weeks helping Hurricane Katrina victims in the gulf coast.

A group of Bascom Palmer Eye Institute ophthalmologists is heading to Baton Rouge this week aboard the institute's 40-foot Vision Van to treat displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina who have lost eyeglasses and suffered other vision problems because of the storm.

The Panama City Boatmen's Association sent a three-truck convoy to Louisiana and Mississippi. Among the supplies: 150 cases of water, 80 cases of Gatorade, and 10 large bags of dog and cat food because the evacuees said they had something to eat, but their pets were literally starving.

Similar stories can be heard from throughout the State of Florida. Members of our Armed Forces and our National Guard have also answered the call and sought to help. But I want to particularly talk about a Florida resident and Navy pilot, LT J.G. Bale Dalton is a member of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 21—the Blackjack Squadron out of San Diego. When the call came through that hurricane relief was needed, his squadron flew helicopters across the country in order to be there in time for them to help. Now his father, who is my dear and longtime friend—currently my general counsel—Skip Dalton, has allowed me to read a little bit from his communications in those first few frantic days.

Writes LT J.G. Bale Dalton, on September 3:

My first flight into New Orleans was incredibly hectic. We went due east from Pensacola, so I was not able to see any of the Mississippi coast. The scene was chaos. Hardly anyone was able to get into the city on the ground, and the water was still rising. Helicopters from all services and even civilians were operating in the area, rescuing people and bringing food and supplies to rally points.

An airborne command and control element P-3 was tasking airplanes as fast as they could, but most often they were not able to give more than a GPS coordinate and a "good luck."

Another entry from September 3:

We were sent to a nursing home to remove what we thought were invalid older people. What we found was a small island of land with a field large enough to land three helicopters around what used to be a nursing home. We moved approximately 50 people—all families that were directed by New Orleans police to that spot.

September 4:

No rest for the weary. After returning to work with about five hours of rest (not sleep, just time from landing to briefing again) we again began to build a picture of what was going on.

People that had been stranded since the day the storm hit were beginning to come out of the woodwork. It was obvious that the first priority was to save people from the rising tides.

I went back into New Orleans later that day with a mission to find fire buckets and begin putting out fires.

Here is another entry from later that day:

We attempted to hoist people from an apartment complex into our helicopter, but were refused when they saw an ambulance a few blocks away that they were going to try to swim to.

Hard to understand for me, but I am sure the thought of being hoisted up on a wire to a helicopter is a scary prospect for most people. We moved from that area to an affected area in the northern part of the city to begin evacuating another group of people gathered by the police. We landed on a tennis court to get these people. They had not had food or water for five days.

I could go on and on with stories of Floridians helping out in the gulf coast, providing relief, aid, assistance, and, as you heard in the case of Navy LT J.G. Bale Dalton, rescuing people from the rising tides. But dramatic as these stories are, they are not unusual. This is what America is all about. If there is a need, Americans are there to help.

Given the impact of the stories and images of the devastation, I understand how our hearts and minds are turned to these current problems. But I am humbly here to ask that we simply do not overlook the fact that there has been a lot of suffering in Florida, that we, too, have suffered significant losses as a result of four very difficult hurricanes last year—an unprecedented number of major hurricanes to hit, crisscrossing the State of Florida—only to be revisited again by Hurricanes Dennis and Katrina this year. The extent of hurricane damage from last year was severe. In fact, we continue to try to dig out from under it.

Affordable long-term housing is one of the serious problems we are facing in Florida not only because of so much housing stock, particularly the affordable type, that was damaged last year, but now with the influx of evacuees into the State, some real long-term problems are beginning to present themselves. I have contacted the President and Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns. I have talked with FEMA and my colleagues in the Senate. We have received some measure of assistance, but we must continue to look forward to the time when all Floridians will be made whole and when life will begin to be normal again for all Floridians.

Katrina did pay us a devastating visit in the early part of that storm. So while we continue to pour our hearts out to those in the gulf coast, I do have to hope that the people of Florida will not be forgotten, as we seek to make all of the necessary decisions for the relief and recovery not only short term

and medium term, but where Florida is now in the long term, when the needs of long-term housing, the needs of long-term health care problems, the needs of reconstruction of public facilities, such as schools, become all the more necessary.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION'S REORGANIZATION

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, earlier today, the Federal Communications Commission Chairman, Kevin Martin, created a new FCC bureau dedicated to public safety and homeland security functions. The new FCC bureau will be named the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau and will handle issues that are currently spread over several separate FCC bureaus and offices. For instance, it will handle enhanced 911 calls. It will handle priority emergency services, an emergency alert system, disaster management coordination, and communications infrastructure protection.

My generation relied on radio. Now all of us have different forms of communications. But there was no uniform communication mechanism such as radio was back in the 1930s or 1940s. Chairman Martin's reorganization recognizes the change in the technologies that can be used for emergency communications.

I commend the FCC, under Chairman Martin, for its leadership in directing the Universal Service Program to play a significant role in rebuilding the communications infrastructure, something that they have announced today also. Since its inception, the focus of the Universal Service Program has been on ensuring that all Americans are connected and able to communicate. As the citizens of Louisiana and Mississippi rebuild and return to their homes, they need to know that they can pick up their phones and make a call, which is why we have universal service. The steps that the FCC announced today, giving priority to rebuilding activities using universal service funds will help both in the short and long term.

The FCC is using these universal service funds temporarily to support wireless handsets, coupled with a package of free minutes for evacuees and people still in the affected area that are without telephone service. The FCC is also helping health care providers and the Red Cross shelters by modifying the health care program to double discounts for public and nonprofit health care providers. The FCC is allowing health care providers to submit new or revised universal support applications—requests for the money—for 2005, since their needs have obviously changed.

On the rebuilding front, universal service will help schools reconnect to the Internet, consumers reconnect to

their phones, and telephone companies to rebuild. Specifically, the FCC is designating schools and libraries struck by the hurricane to receive the highest level of priority under the E-Rate Program for 2005 and 2006. They are allowing schools and libraries serving evacuees to amend their 2005 application to account for the unexpected increase in population. They are using the Link-Up Program to provide support to pay the cost of reconnecting consumers to the network as the disaster-struck area is rebuilt. And they are providing BellSouth flexibility to use high-cost model support to rebuild wire centers affected by the hurricane.

In other words, this is a unique use of universal service funds. It took courage to do so. I am proud to hear of the FCC's willingness to work around the clock to assist companies in the affected areas with needed waivers. I also commend the FCC for its plans to establish the new Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau. We have all seen the devastation and communications outages caused by the massive flooding and the storm surge.

Certainly, we will have to look at improving our Nation's alert and disaster warning systems as well as our communications interoperability. As chair of the Commerce Committee in the Senate, along with my cochair and good friend, Senator DAN INOUE of Hawaii, I intend to work closely with my colleagues in the Senate and the House, the FCC, and others on these issues. We will pursue permanent solutions. Chairman Martin and the FCC members deserve credit for having acted so rapidly to deal with the disaster-related issues before us today.

I thank the Chair and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR SCIENCE, THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE, JUSTICE, AND COMMERCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006 CONTINUED

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, pretty soon we will be coming to the last round of amendments to the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill. When he is on the floor, I will thank, publicly and personally, the distinguished Senator from Alabama, Mr. SHELBY. We certainly worked on a bipartisan basis to move this bill, to accomplish national objectives, and to respond to the compelling human and financial needs of our neighbors in the Gulf States. Moving this legislation has been enjoyable because there has been such a spirit of bipartisan co-

operation. Senators have worked on their amendments. They have offered them jointly. In a few minutes, we will be voting on an amendment by Senator SNOWE of Maine and JOHN KERRY of Massachusetts to help small business, particularly, in relation to Katrina. That has been the example throughout.

As the ranking member on this new subcommittee, I hope the spirit of the Senate, in moving forward on this bill, will be the spirit of the Senate all the time. We need more of that. We need more civility. We need more collegiality and more of that spirit of "let's get it done" and "let's get it done together."

There were many issues that were new to me, at least the depth of the national problem. We are all familiar with Katrina. One of the things that came up was the whole methamphetamine issue, which seems to have the country in its grips, to listen to the Senators from North Dakota talk about what it means in a rural State, to listen to other Senators who have come in either with individual projects or with national issues. Again, in a spirit of bipartisanship, Senators DAYTON and CHAMBLISS came in with a request to restore over \$200 million to fight this scourge that seems to be gripping people at all economic levels. The methamphetamine issue has reached epidemic levels. That bipartisan support added money to the budget and added resources for local communities.

Another champion, of course, was the Senator from Washington, Ms. CANTWELL. She offered an amendment for \$20 million on the Hot Spot Program. Where are the real hotspots of meth? We worked with her to adopt that amendment. We thank her and particularly the Senator from Minnesota, Senator DAYTON, the Senator from Georgia, Mr. CHAMBLISS, for being strong advocates. Every other Senator came to me and said: We are glad this is in the bill.

Senator CANTWELL, focusing on the hotspots, sends vital Federal support to law enforcement officers and first responders who are on the frontlines of the meth epidemic. Actually, those crime fighters have a great friend in Senator CANTWELL.

We thank everyone who has helped move this legislation. We are looking forward to moving to final passage. We have two more amendments, and then we will move to final passage. Again, the spirit of the Senate has been wonderful. We are meeting real needs—whether it is Katrina, fighting the methamphetamine epidemic, providing weather services, and so on.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a vote on or in relation to Snowe-Kerry amendment No. 1717, with no second-degree amendments in order prior to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SHELBY. For the information of my colleagues, we are now down to one or two outstanding issues. That is good news in the Senate on a Thursday afternoon. During the next vote, we will try to finalize those amendments. Senator MIKULSKI and I, the managers of the bill, have been working with everybody in the Senate to try to move the bill forward. It is our expectation that we will quickly proceed to passage of the bill. I, therefore, alert all Senators now that they should remain close to the Chamber, following this upcoming vote, hopefully for final passage.

I yield to my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, first of all, once again, we are coming now to the final aspects of this bill. We have been able to achieve this because of the wonderful bipartisan support that existed between Senator SHELBY, myself, and our staffs. We want to thank them for doing that. I will thank them as we go into wrapup.

Our colleagues, we thank them again for their cooperation in moving the amendments, working on a bipartisan basis. And now as we go to the Snowe-Kerry amendment and the vote, we ask Senators who have those outstanding amendments to consult with the floor and leadership staff, and ourselves as well, because we think we could have a vote—not promptly but expeditiously—after the conclusion of the Snowe-Kerry amendment.

Again, I say to my colleagues to come, vote, stick around, let's work together, and we can finish our bill. People need this bill. It funds the FBI. It funds Katrina help. It funds the methamphetamine help about which we have been talking, and our very important Weather Service. There are so many provisions in it.

I yield the floor and look forward to the vote.

AMENDMENT NO. 1717

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alabama [Mr. SHELBY], for Ms. SNOWE, for herself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. VITTER, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. TALENT, proposes an amendment numbered 1717.

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of Thursday, September 14, 2005, under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. SHELBY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 1717.